



The Blasphemy Trap

**An Investigative Report on Digital
Entrapment and Blasphemy
Prosecutions in Pakistan**

(2016–2026)



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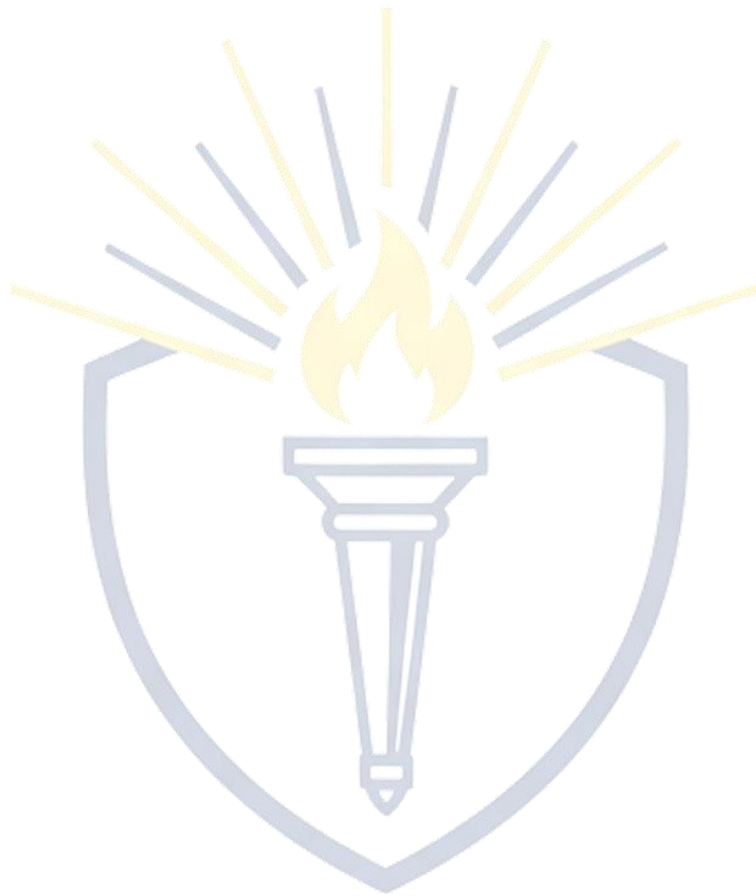
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Prologue

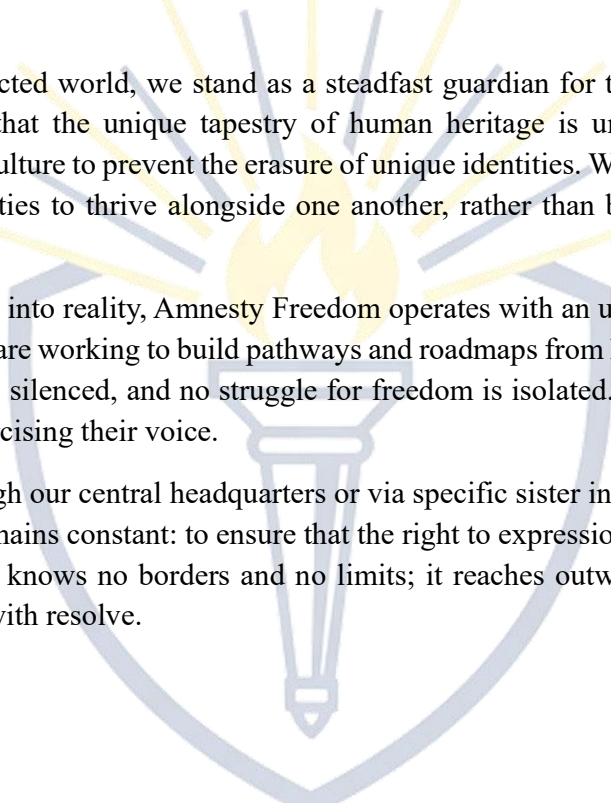
Human rights violations often manifest through specific, recognizable symptoms: the suppression of expression, the dismantling of culture, and the removal of specific norms wherever they occur. To counter these forces, Amnesty Freedom upholds the universal right to freedom of expression, recognizing it as the very foundation from which all other freedoms arise. The organization is dedicated to prioritizing human freedom throughout the world, operating across all boundaries to nurture a culture of dignity, dialogue, and accountability that transcends geography, race, gender, ethnicity, and belief.

In an increasingly connected world, we stand as a steadfast guardian for the preservation of diverse cultures. We recognize that the unique tapestry of human heritage is under threat, and we stand resolutely against monoculture to prevent the erasure of unique identities. We believe that true freedom allows distinct communities to thrive alongside one another, rather than being forced into a single, homogenized mold.

To transform these ideals into reality, Amnesty Freedom operates with an unwavering commitment to inclusion and equity. We are working to build pathways and roadmaps from here to infinity and beyond to ensure that no voice is silenced, and no struggle for freedom is isolated. We protect those who are in danger simply for exercising their voice.

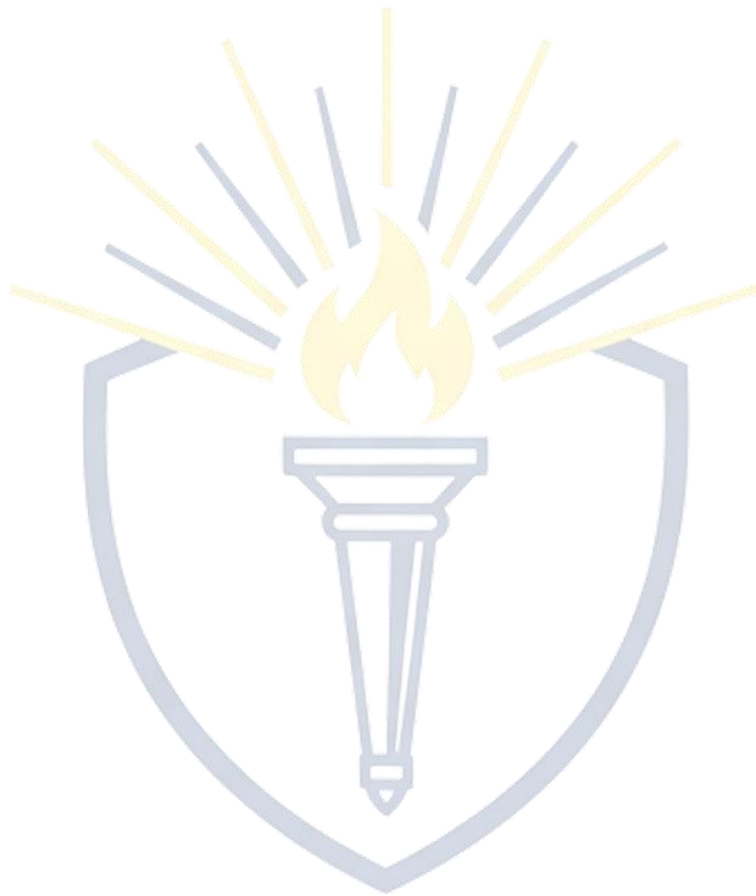
Whether operating through our central headquarters or via specific sister initiatives like Amnesty BD, our primary objective remains constant: to ensure that the right to expression is upheld without fear of retribution. This mission knows no borders and no limits; it reaches outward with purpose, upward with hope, and forward with resolve.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This investigative report examines how blasphemy accusations in Pakistan are now being produced through digital entrapment, and what happens to the people caught by them. It covers the period from the passage of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) in 2016 to October 2026, with most of the evidence drawn from 2022 onward, when the number of online blasphemy prosecutions rose sharply. According to the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), the number of prisoners held for blasphemy in the cases it examined grew from 11 in 2020 to 767 by July 25, 2024, with 581 of them in Punjab [1].

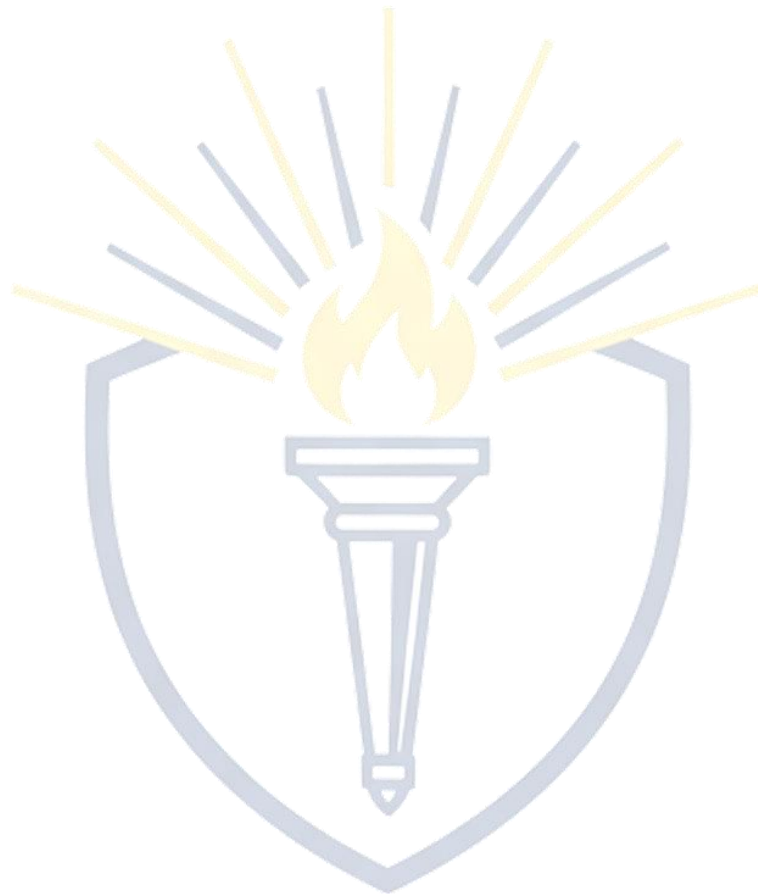
The report is organized around seven questions: how the entrapment operations work; how PECA is combined with Sections 295-A, 295-B, and 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code; how the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing handled these cases; who is targeted; what physical and judicial consequences follow; what prevents humanitarian organizations from intervening effectively; and what Pakistan's digital rights organizations, particularly Bolo Bhi and the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF), have recorded.

The evidence points to a repeatable method. A target, usually a young man, is contacted by someone posing as a woman through a fake Facebook profile or a foreign phone number. The contact moves to WhatsApp, where the target is drawn into a group or a private chat and asked to share or forward material later described as blasphemous. The target is then invited to a meeting, detained by private individuals, and handed to investigators along with screenshots that serve as the core evidence. Of 93 prisoners the NCHR interviewed in depth, 83 said a woman using a pseudonym had first contacted them, and 87 said they had been asked to share screenshots of blasphemous images [1]. The NCHR found that "a private entity initiated almost all of the FIA cases" [1], and in July 2025 a single bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) listed 20 reasons for a formal inquiry, including the reuse of the same Facebook credentials across multiple First Information Reports (FIRs) [2].

The legal consequences are severe because the charges are stacked. A single set of WhatsApp messages can produce charges under Section 295-C, which carries a mandatory death sentence, alongside Sections 295-A, 295-B, and 298-A of the Penal Code and Section 11 of PECA [3], [4]. Trial courts have handed down death sentences in several such cases, while appellate courts have overturned some of them after the accused had spent years in prison. No one has been executed for blasphemy in Pakistan [5], yet the accusation alone exposes the accused, their families, and their lawyers to mob violence. The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) recorded 104 extrajudicial killings linked to blasphemy allegations between 1994 and 2024 [6].

Humanitarian organizations face three practical bottlenecks: finding defense lawyers willing to act in the first hours after arrest, protecting detainees from violence inside prisons, and relocating people whose acquittal does not end the threat to their lives. These problems are made harder by tight government control over the registration and funding of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and by the January 2025 amendments to PECA, which created new speech offenses and a new investigation agency [7], [8].

This document sets out the documented record as it stands in October 2026. The IHC's order to form an inquiry commission was suspended in July 2025 [9], and the matter remained pending in August 2026 [10]. Many allegations against the private complainant network have not been tested in court. The report distinguishes throughout between findings by official bodies, court observations, and claims made by families and advocates.



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SCOPE, METHOD, AND DEFINITIONS

This report draws on published material from Pakistani statutory bodies, Pakistani courts as reported in the press, international human rights monitors, and Pakistani digital rights organizations. The principal sources are the NCHR's 2024 report on blasphemy cases [1], the IHC proceedings of 2024 to 2026 as reported by *Dawn* and Voicepk, Human Rights Watch's June 2025 investigation into the profit motives behind blasphemy accusations [5], Amnesty International's 2016 study of the blasphemy laws [4], the annual reports of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), and the published work of Bolo Bhi and the DRF.

Three limits apply. First, most allegations against the private complainant network come from the accused, their families, and their lawyers, and have been only partly tested in court. Second, official figures are inconsistent: different bodies count cases, FIRs, accused persons, and prisoners, often over different periods. Third, the IHC inquiry that might have resolved many of these questions has not taken place. Where sources disagree, the report gives both figures.

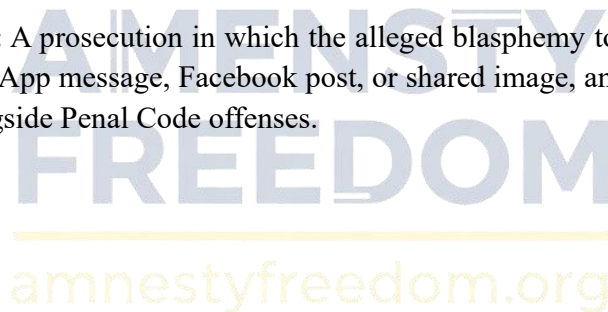
Key Terms

Digital entrapment: The deliberate use of online deception to induce a person to create, share, or hold content that can then be presented as evidence of a criminal offense. In the cases examined here, the offense is blasphemy.

Honey trapping: A form of entrapment in which the operator poses as a romantic or sexual interest. Pakistani courts, the NCHR, and the press use this term for the fake female profiles described in Section 1.

Private complainant network: The group of individuals who, according to the NCHR, the IHC, and families of the accused, identify targets, gather screenshots, file complaints, and appear as witnesses across many unrelated cases. The most frequently named organization is the Legal Commission on Blasphemy Pakistan (LCBP). The IHC found that it is not registered under any law [2].

Online blasphemy case: A prosecution in which the alleged blasphemy took place through a digital channel, such as a WhatsApp message, Facebook post, or shared image, and in which PECA offenses are usually charged alongside Penal Code offenses.



1. OPERATIONAL TACTICS OF DIGITAL ENTRAPMENT

The accounts collected by the NCHR, the findings of the IHC, and the testimony of families describe a consistent pattern. No single source covers every step, but taken together they show a process designed to produce a complaint that investigators will accept and courts will treat as serious.

Identity Spoofing and Fake Profiles

The first contact usually comes from a profile that claims to be a young woman. The NCHR reported that accused prisoners described “a similar modus operandi involving contact by a girl, often from a Spanish number or a fake Facebook ID” [1]. It also found “the repeated involvement of the same 4–5 young women, using identical names and phone numbers” in FIRs filed in Karachi [1]. Families who spoke at the National Press Club in Islamabad in January 2025 said the group befriends young men on social media while “pretending to be in love with them” [11].

The IHC record suggests that some of these identities were not real women. The single bench noted an allegation that a lawyer’s clerk “posed as a woman in WhatsApp groups” [2]. It also found that the same Facebook IDs and passwords appeared in multiple FIRs after they had already been surrendered in earlier cases [2]. Reusing a profile after it has been handed over as evidence makes sense only if the profile functions as a tool rather than a personal account.

One alleged operator, known in chats as “Iman” or “Imaan,” was identified as Komal Ismail. She went missing in November 2024 after the families filed their petition. Her national identity card was blocked, her name was placed on the Exit Control List, and four SIM cards registered to her stopped working [12]. She later appeared before the court [13]. The judge observed that the FIA had not established whether “Iman” ever contacted the accused in the case before him [12]. In August 2026, families were still calling for her arrest [10].

Infiltration of Private Messaging Groups

Once contact is established, the conversation moves to WhatsApp. Some targets are added to groups; others are drawn in through groups they joined for other reasons. In one case reported by Agence France-Presse (AFP), the accused had joined a WhatsApp group for job seekers before a woman contacted him [14]. Private groups matter because their content is not public. Material shared there reaches an outsider only if a member records and passes it on, which places the person who joined or created the group in control of what becomes evidence.

Courts have begun to address the question of group liability. In July 2026, Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh of the Lahore High Court (LHC) held that creating or administering a WhatsApp group does not by itself make a person criminally liable for what other members post. Liability attaches to the person who personally uploads, forwards, shares, or circulates the content [15]. The ruling limits one route to prosecution, but it does not help a target who was persuaded to forward the material himself.

Baiting and Inducement

The decisive step is getting the target to send something. The NCHR found that 87 of the 93 prisoners it interviewed in depth (94%) said they had been asked to share screenshots of blasphemous images [1]. The NCHR recorded the same number as having been involved with pornography or pornographic groups, which suggests that shame and fear of exposure were part of the pressure [1]. In the case of Aneeqa Ateeq, sentenced to death in January 2022, the complainant had met her on a gaming application in 2019 and stayed in contact with her for about a year and a half before the case was filed [16]. The LHC acquitted her in October 2025, noting among other things that the complainant's phone was never forensically examined and that the SIM card he used was registered to someone else [16].

The NCHR also recorded that the FIA disregarded the context of the conversations between the accused and the complainant [1]. When an investigator reads only the forwarded image and not the exchange that produced it, the person who requested the content disappears from the record and the person who complied becomes the only offender.

Device Seizure, Device Theft, and Planted Evidence

After a target has been lured to a meeting, his phone becomes the evidence. Accused persons told the NCHR that “the evidence was either planted or based on screenshots found on their phones,” and the NCHR found that proper forensic examinations of their devices were not carried out [1]. In one case, a device was damaged so badly that it could not be analyzed [1]. The Pakistan Peoples Party's Human Rights Cell described the scheme in January 2025 as including the hacking of devices and the planting of offensive images [17].

The IHC found that FIA officials admitted that “in many instances, they did not carry out the detailed forensic examination of the complainant's devices” [2]. In the specific case examined in the July 2025 judgment, only five images had been recovered from the accused's phone, call records went back only one year, and WhatsApp data was unavailable [12]. In a separate bail matter decided in July 2026, defense counsel pointed to a gap of five weeks between the seizure of a phone and its forensic examination [15]. Gaps of this kind leave the integrity of the evidence open to challenge, but in practice the accused remains in custody while that challenge is argued.

Private Arrests and Handover to Investigators

In a significant share of cases, the first detention is carried out by private individuals rather than the state. Of the 93 prisoners the NCHR interviewed, 87 (94%) said they were invited to a meeting under false pretenses, such as a relationship, an immigration opportunity, or a job; 31 (33.3%) said private individuals apprehended them; and 26 (28%) said they were first held at private premises [1]. Families have referred to a “safe house” in the G-8 sector of Islamabad [11]. The IHC cited a video showing a private citizen arresting a suspect outside a university in Layyah, using a car registered to the lawyer alleged to lead the network [2]. *Dawn* reported that the judgment also noted same-day arrests and FIR registrations [13].

Table 1 NCHR Findings from In-Depth Interviews with 93 Blasphemy Prisoners (2024)

Finding reported by interviewees	Number	Share of 93
First contacted by a woman using a pseudonym	83	89%
Invited to a meeting under false pretenses before arrest	87	94%
Asked to share screenshots of blasphemous images	87	94%
Involved with pornography or pornographic groups	87	94%
Apprehended by private individuals	31	33.3%
Held at private premises initially	26	28%
Custodial torture	63	68%
Signatures or thumbprints taken on blank papers	60	65%
Lawyers pressured to drop cases	14	15%
Physical or mental impairment	2	Not stated

Source: compiled from the NCHR report [1].

The Network Behind the Complaints

The NCHR reported that a private entity initiated almost all of the FIA cases it reviewed, with members of that entity serving as complainants, and that the primary network appeared to be based in Lahore [1]. It described “an organized network actively luring and inciting individuals” [1]. A January 2024 report by the Punjab Police Special Branch, which the NCHR cites as “The Blasphemy Business,” described an organized effort in which young people were deliberately targeted and falsely accused for purposes of blackmail [1], [18]. Defense counsel for the complainants later told the IHC that the Punjab Police had disowned the report before the LHC [19].

The LCBP, the organization most often named, told AFP in 2024 that it was pursuing more than 300 cases. Its leader, Sheraz Ahmad Farooqi, said that women were involved in tracking and arresting the men but that they were not members of his group [14]. AFP reported that one such group had been behind 27 people sentenced to life imprisonment or death over three years; two FIA officials denied acting on vigilante tips [14]. Families have said that 25 to 30 people act as plaintiffs across the cases [11].

Lawyer Rao Abdul Rahim has appeared for the complainants in several cases. After four men were sentenced to death in Rawalpindi in January 2025 on an LCBP complaint, he told the press that “our case was supported by forensic evidence from the devices” [3]. He was among the appellants who challenged the IHC’s commission order [9]. ADF International, which represents a Christian defendant, alleges that he heads the network; that is an allegation by an interested party and has not been established in court [20].

Human Rights Watch places these cases within a wider pattern in which blasphemy accusations are used to settle disputes, grab land, and extort money [5]. It cites the NCHR’s finding that at least 450 people were falsely accused through an organized scheme [21]. USCIRF has referred to alleged collusion between a “blasphemy gang” and FIA officials [22]. The NCHR itself recorded that some FIA staff appeared to be working closely with the private entity [1].

2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK: PECA AND THE BLASPHEMY PROVISIONS

Online blasphemy cases sit at the junction of two bodies of law. The Pakistan Penal Code defines the religious offenses and sets their penalties. PECA defines the electronic offenses, gives an investigating agency its powers, and allows regulators to block content. Prosecutors routinely charge both.

The Blasphemy Provisions of the Penal Code

The provisions most relevant here were added to Chapter XV of the Penal Code in stages between 1927 and 1986 [4]. Section 295-A, the oldest, covers deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings. Section 295-B, added in 1982, covers defiling the Quran. Section 295-C, added in 1986, covers derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad. In 1990, the Federal Shariat Court held in *Muhammad Ismail Qureshi v. Pakistan* that the penalty under Section 295-C “is death and nothing else,” removing life imprisonment as an alternative [4]. Sections 298-A to 298-C cover remarks about other holy personages and restrict the religious practice of Ahmadis.

Table 2 Principal Religious Offenses in the Pakistan Penal Code

Section	Added	Offense	Penalty
295-A	1927	Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings by insulting a religion	Up to 10 years’ imprisonment, a fine, or both
295-B	1982	Defiling, damaging, or desecrating the Quran	Life imprisonment
295-C	1986	Derogatory remarks, direct or indirect, about the Prophet Muhammad	Death; made mandatory by the Federal Shariat Court in 1990
298-A	1980	Derogatory remarks about holy personages	Originally up to 3 years; the 2023 amendment set a range of 3 years to life imprisonment
298-B	1984	Misuse of epithets and titles reserved for holy personages (Ahmadis)	Up to 3 years’ imprisonment and a fine
298-C	1984	Ahmadis calling themselves Muslims or propagating their faith	Up to 3 years’ imprisonment and a fine

Sources: Amnesty International [4]; USCIRF [23]. The penalty for Section 298-A was raised by an amendment passed in 2023 [23].

Amnesty International notes that Sections 295-A, 295-B, 295-C, 298-B, and 298-C are non-bailable, which means “bail is not a right but only granted at the court’s discretion” [4]. In practice, a person charged under Section 295-C can spend years in pretrial detention.

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016

PECA, which received assent in August 2016, contains several provisions that prosecutors pair with the blasphemy sections [24]:

- **Section 9 (glorification of an offense):** up to seven years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to PKR 10 million, or both.

- **Section 11 (hate speech):** content that “advances or is likely to advance interfaith, sectarian or racial hatred,” punishable by up to seven years’ imprisonment, a fine, or both. This is the PECA section most often charged alongside the Penal Code offenses.
- **Section 20 (offenses against the dignity of a natural person):** up to three years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to PKR 1 million, or both.
- **Section 37 (unlawful online content):** authorizes the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to remove or block content “in the interest of the glory of Islam” or for reasons of security, public order, decency, or morality.

The Act also allows the government to designate an investigation agency and requires a forensic laboratory independent of that agency [24]. Until 2025, the designated agency was the FIA, acting through its Cyber Crime Wing.

How the Two Regimes Combine in Online Cases

The pairing works in two directions. PECA brings the case to a specialized federal agency with powers to seize and examine devices, and the Penal Code supplies the penalties that make the case grave. In the Rawalpindi case decided on January 24, 2025, four men were sentenced to death under Section 295-C and also convicted under Sections 295-B, 295-A, and 298-A of the Penal Code and Section 11 of PECA, based on an FIR filed in October 2022 [3]. Two months later, the same court sentenced five more men to death in a separate online case [25]. In the July 2026 LHC bail matter, the FIA had charged Sections 295-A, 295-B, 295-C, 298-A, and 109 (abetment) of the Penal Code together with Section 11 of PECA [15].

Stacking matters for three reasons. It makes every offense in the bundle effectively non-bailable. It allows a conviction to stand on a lesser charge even if the Section 295-C finding falls. And it raises the stakes for the accused so sharply that, as several families have described, the threat of prosecution becomes a lever for extortion [5].

The 2025 Amendments and Regulatory Expansion

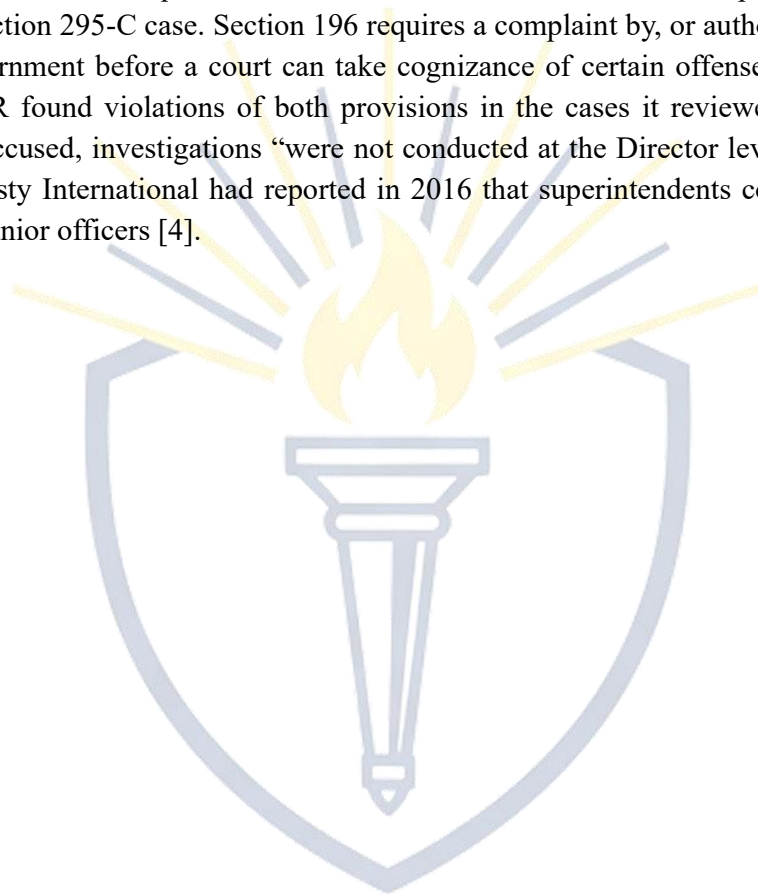
In January 2025, Parliament passed amendments to PECA within a week; the President signed them on January 29, 2025 [7]. The amendments added Section 26A, which criminalizes spreading false information likely to cause “fear, panic or disorder or unrest,” with a penalty of up to three years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to PKR 2 million, or both [26]. They created a Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority, a Social Media Complaint Council, and Social Media Protection Tribunals, and widened the definition of unlawful content [7]. They also replaced the FIA Cyber Crime Wing with a new National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) [7], [26]. The Authority’s first chairman was appointed in March 2026 [27].

Amnesty International described the new offense as “vague and ambiguous” and warned that it would “chill what little is left of the right to online expression” [28]. Human Rights Watch recorded about 689 PECA cases between January and August 2025 [21]. In March 2026, a Senate standing committee

formed a subcommittee to examine misuse of the Act after hearing that police were still registering PECA cases even though jurisdiction now lay exclusively with the NCCIA [29].

Procedural Safeguards on Paper

Two provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) are meant to slow down blasphemy prosecutions. Section 156-A requires that an officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police investigate any Section 295-C case. Section 196 requires a complaint by, or authorized by, the federal or provincial government before a court can take cognizance of certain offenses, including Section 295-A. The NCHR found violations of both provisions in the cases it reviewed [1]. It noted that, according to the accused, investigations “were not conducted at the Director level, violating Section 156-A” [1]. Amnesty International had reported in 2016 that superintendents commonly leave such investigations to junior officers [4].



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3. THE FIA CYBER CRIME WING: PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE

From 2016 until the 2025 amendments took effect, the FIA Cyber Crime Wing was the agency responsible for investigating PECA offenses, including the online blasphemy cases that make up most of the recent increase. The NCHR found that “the overwhelming majority of the blasphemy cases involved FIA Cybercrime” [1]. In Karachi Central Jail, 222 of the 331 blasphemy prisoners (67%) had been arrested by the FIA [1].

The Formal Process

In outline, a cybercrime case moves through five stages: a complaint to the agency; a preliminary inquiry to verify it; registration of an FIR; seizure and forensic examination of devices; and submission of the case to court. The NCHR’s questions to the FIA, sent on December 14, 2023, asked how complaints were verified, how inquiries were conducted, and on what basis FIRs were registered [1]. The published report does not quote the FIA’s answers.

Several legal requirements apply at these stages. PECA requires forensic analysis by a laboratory independent of the investigating agency [24]. The CrPC requires a senior officer to investigate Section 295-C cases and, for Section 295-A, a complaint authorized by the government [1]. A Senate committee was told in 2026 that, under the amended Act, only the NCCIA may register PECA cases [29].

Documented Departures from Procedure

The NCHR’s findings describe a process that departed from these requirements at almost every stage [1]:

- **Complaint intake:** almost all FIA cases were initiated by a single private entity whose members acted as complainants, and the same complainants appeared across cases and provinces.
- **Arrest:** suspects were often first detained by private individuals at private premises and then handed over to the FIA.
- **Evidence:** proper forensic examinations of the accused persons’ phones were not carried out, and the context of conversations between the accused and the complainants was ignored.
- **Seniority of investigation:** there was no evidence that investigations were conducted by officers of the rank required by Section 156-A.
- **Treatment in custody:** 63 of 93 interviewed prisoners (68%) reported custodial torture, and 60 (65%) said they had been made to sign or thumbprint blank papers.

The NCHR also investigated the death of Husnain Ali, a blasphemy prisoner who died in Adiala jail in Rawalpindi on June 9, 2024, and found evidence of alleged torture during FIA remand [1]. It recommended a joint investigation team that would include the Special Branch, the Intelligence Bureau, and the FIA; forensic analysis of all seized phones; action against the women involved in entrapment; compliance with Section 156-A; and disciplinary proceedings against FIA officers [1].

Findings of the Islamabad High Court

In August and September 2024, more than 100 families petitioned the IHC for a commission of inquiry [30], [10]. Over 42 hearings, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan summoned senior officials, including the cabinet secretary and the FIA director general [18], and in March 2025 he ordered live broadcast of the proceedings [31].

On July 15, 2025, he directed the federal government to form a commission within 30 days and to report within four months [12]. The judgment cited nearly 400 FIRs and about 700 accused persons [13], and set out 20 reasons for an inquiry [2]. These included the reuse of surrendered Facebook IDs and passwords; the private arrest outside Layyah University; the clerk alleged to have posed as a woman; the FIA's admission that it often did not examine complainants' devices; and four deaths in custody that had not been the subject of any inquiry, one of them with video showing bruises on the body [2].

On July 24, 2025, a division bench of Justices Khadim Hussain Soomro and Mohammad Azam Khan suspended the order on an intra-court appeal by the complainants [32], [9]. The appellants argued that the petitioners lacked standing, that many of the roughly 400 cases fell outside the IHC's territorial jurisdiction, and that only the federal government could form a commission [9]. The bench's detailed order said a commission could interfere with cases pending before other high courts [13]. A *Dawn* editorial called the suspension a "retreat from justice" and noted that both the Special Branch and the NCHR had found credible evidence of a network exploiting the blasphemy laws for money [33]. Human Rights Watch reported that no commission had been formed by December 2025 [21]. As of August 22, 2026, the appeal was still pending, with a hearing scheduled for September 9, 2026, after repeated delays [10]. This report found no published outcome of that hearing.

Institutional Response and the Transition to the NCCIA

The FIA's institutional response has been uneven. In January 2025, the Pakistan Peoples Party's Human Rights Cell said senior FIA officers had acknowledged the problem and that new FIA directives required prior approval before raids or FIRs in such cases [17]. This report could not locate the directive itself. At the same time, the agency has continued to defend convictions. After the LHC acquitted Aneeqa Ateeq in October 2025, the NCCIA, which had by then taken over from the FIA Cyber Crime Wing, appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that the case rested on forensic evidence from her phone [34].

The transfer of authority to the NCCIA does not by itself resolve the problems the NCHR identified. The cases already in court were built by the FIA, and the NCCIA has inherited both its files and its litigation positions.

4. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE TARGETED

The people accused of blasphemy in Pakistan are, by number, mostly Muslim. Religious minorities are accused at rates far above their share of the population, and the online cases have added a new profile: young men with smartphones who are reached through social media.

Overall Profile of the Accused

The CSJ, a Lahore-based research group, recorded 344 new accused persons in 2024. Of these, 70% were Muslim, 14% Ahmadi, 9% Hindu, and 6% Christian; 62% of cases were in Punjab, with Sheikhpura and Lahore the leading districts [6]. The CSJ counts at least 2,793 people charged since 1987 [6]. For 2023, the U.S. Department of State, citing the CSJ, reported 329 accused, of whom 75% were Muslim and 20% Ahmadi [35]. The same report noted that the FIA Cyber Crime Wing arrested 140 people on online blasphemy charges in 2023 [35]. By June 2025, Punjab's prisons held 729 blasphemy inmates, including 51 women and two juveniles [36].

Table 3 Religious Affiliation of Persons Newly Accused of Blasphemy, 2023 and 2024

Religious affiliation	2023 (329 accused)	2024 (344 accused)
Muslim	75%	70%
Ahmadi	20%	14%
Hindu	Not reported	9%
Christian	3.3%	6%

Sources: CSJ data as reported by Dawn [6] and the U.S. Department of State [35]. Percentages are as published and may not total 100.

Young Men and Students

The online entrapment cases fall most heavily on young Muslim men. The NCHR found that most blasphemy inmates in Adiala and Lahore were between about 20 and 33 years old [1]. Families describe their relatives as “children” and students [11]. In March 2024, a court in Gujranwala sentenced a 22-year-old student to death and a 17-year-old to life imprisonment for sharing material on WhatsApp, in a case investigated by the FIA in Lahore [37]. In November 2025, the LHC acquitted five men aged 20 to 25 who had been arrested in 2022 and four of whom had been sentenced to death in 2023; the complainant had filed at least five separate complaints [38]. Families who held a press conference in Islamabad in August 2026 said that more than 120 people had been acquitted and about 300 remained in Punjab's prisons [10].

Religious Minorities

Ahmadis face both the general blasphemy provisions and Sections 298-B and 298-C, which criminalize aspects of their religious identity. USCIRF reports that enforcement particularly targets Ahmadis [39]. HRCF recorded 35 attacks on Ahmadi places of worship, 319 desecrated graves, 43 arrests for religious offenses, and at least six faith-based killings of Ahmadis in 2024 [40]. In September 2026, United Nations experts condemned the “pattern of impunity” surrounding attacks on the community [41].

Christians have been prosecuted in several online cases. In September 2024, Shagufta Kiran, a Christian woman, was sentenced to death over content shared in a WhatsApp group [42]. A Christian

youth, Ehsan Shan, was sentenced to death in 2024 [43]. Ishtiaq Saleem, a Christian sanitation worker arrested in November 2022 over social media material, had been held for more than three years after bail was denied by the trial courts and the Supreme Court, according to his lawyers [20]. Hindus are accused less often by number, but the youngest person ever charged, an eight-year-old Hindu boy in Rahim Yar Khan, was charged in 2021 [44].

Secular Voices, Journalists, and Dissenters

Bolo Bhi's tracker of blasphemy accusations based on social media posts, covering 2016 to 2019, documents a series of cases against people whose posts were critical or irreverent rather than devotional [45]. In 2017, the government asked Facebook and Twitter to help identify users suspected of blasphemy, and a petition in the IHC targeted five bloggers associated with the "Bhensa," "Mochi," and "Roshni" pages; the bloggers were cleared in December 2017 [45]. In the same year, Taimoor Raza was sentenced to death over a Facebook post; his online debating partner was later revealed to be a counterterrorism official [46].

Junaid Hafeez, a visiting lecturer at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, was arrested in March 2013 over Facebook posts and sentenced to death in December 2019 [47]. He has been in solitary confinement since 2014 [48]. His appeal was heard by the LHC on September 22, 2026, with arguments on the admissibility of digital evidence, and was listed again for October 10, 2026 [47]. Journalist Waqar Satti faced blasphemy proceedings in 2022 over a video posted on Twitter [49]. The broader use of PECA against critics is documented separately: Freedom Network recorded 58 legal cases against journalists between April 2025 and March 2026, mostly under PECA [50], and in January 2026 human rights lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha were sentenced to 17 years under PECA on an NCCIA complaint [51]. Mazari had spoken alongside the families of the entrapment victims at their January 2025 press conference [11]. Her case was not a blasphemy prosecution, but it shows the risks facing lawyers who take on these causes.



Table 4 Selected Online Blasphemy Prosecutions, 2017–2026

Year	Accused	Channel	Outcome	Source
2017	Taimoor Raza	Facebook	Death sentence; his online interlocutor was a counterterrorism official	[46]
2019	Junaid Hafeez, university lecturer	Facebook	Death sentence in December 2019; appeal still pending before the LHC in October 2026	[47]
2022	Aneeqa Ateeq	WhatsApp	Death sentence in January 2022; acquitted by the LHC in October 2025; NCCIA appeal filed in the Supreme Court	[16], [34]
2023	Five men aged 20 to 25, Rawalpindi	Online content	Four sentenced to death in 2023; all five acquitted by the LHC in November 2025	[38]
2024	Student, 22, and minor, 17, Gujranwala	WhatsApp	Death sentence and life imprisonment in March 2024	[37]
2024	Shagufta Kiran, Christian	WhatsApp group	Death sentence in September 2024	[42]
2025	Four men, Rawalpindi	WhatsApp and social media	Death sentences in January 2025 on an LCBP complaint	[3]
2025	Five men, Rawalpindi	Online content	Death sentences in March 2025	[25]
2026	WhatsApp group administrator, Lahore	WhatsApp	Bail refused; LHC held that administrators are not liable for other members' posts	[15]

5. PHYSICAL AND JUDICIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ACCUSED

An accusation of blasphemy in Pakistan carries consequences that begin long before any verdict. The accused may be attacked by a crowd, harmed in custody, held for years without trial, or sentenced to death, and an acquittal does not reliably end the danger.

Mob Violence and Vigilante Killings

Counts of killings linked to blasphemy allegations differ by source and method. The CSJ recorded 104 extrajudicial killings between 1994 and 2024 [6]. Human Rights Watch cites at least 65 people killed since 1990 [52]. In 2024 alone, the CSJ recorded 10 such killings [6].

Several incidents illustrate the pattern. In April 2017, Mashal Khan, a 23-year-old student, was killed by a mob at Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan; police later found no blasphemous material on his devices [45], [46]. In December 2021, Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan factory manager, was lynched in Sialkot and his body set on fire [53]. In August 2023, crowds in Jaranwala attacked Christian homes and churches for about 10 hours; USCIRF counted at least 24 churches damaged [23], while the U.S. Department of State reported 26 churches and more than 200 families displaced [35]. In May 2024, Nazir Masih, a 70-year-old Christian in Sargodha, was beaten by a mob of about 2,000 people and died of his injuries on June 2 [40]. In June 2024, a tourist accused of burning a Quran in Madyan, Swat, was taken from a police station and beaten to death [40], [42].

State agents have also killed people accused of blasphemy. In September 2024, Dr. Shahnawaz Kunbhar in Umerkot and a man in Quetta were shot dead by police after being accused [42]. HRCP reported that Dr. Kunbhar was killed in police custody and that a mob later burned his body [40]. In July 2020, Tahir Naseem, an Ahmadi on trial for blasphemy, was shot dead inside a Peshawar courtroom by a man who had brought a gun into the building [54]. In April 2025, Laeeq Ahmad Cheema, an Ahmadi, was killed in Karachi after a protest by workers of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) outside an Ahmadi place of worship [55].



Table 5 Selected Incidents of Blasphemy-Related Violence, 2017–2025

Date	Location	Victim	What happened	Source
Apr. 2017	Mardan	Mashal Khan, student	Killed by a mob on his university campus	[46]
Jul. 2020	Peshawar	Tahir Naseem, Ahmadi	Shot dead in a courtroom during his trial	[54]
Dec. 2021	Sialkot	Priyantha Kumara, Sri Lankan factory manager	Lynched; body set on fire	[53]
Aug. 2023	Jaranwala	Christian community	At least 24 churches and many homes attacked over about 10 hours	[23]
May 2024	Sargodha	Nazir Masih, 70, Christian	Beaten by a mob; died on June 2, 2024	[40]
Jun. 2024	Madyan, Swat	Tourist	Taken from a police station and beaten to death	[40]
Sep. 2024	Umerkot	Dr. Shahnawaz Kunbhar	Killed by police; body later burned by a mob	[40]
Sep. 2024	Quetta	Man accused of blasphemy	Shot dead by police	[42]
Apr. 2025	Karachi	Laeq Ahmad Cheema, Ahmadi	Killed after a TLP protest outside an Ahmadi place of worship	[55]

Custodial Harm

The NCHR recorded custodial torture reported by 68% of the prisoners it interviewed and found evidence of torture in the death of Husnain Ali [1]. The IHC cited four deaths in custody among the accused in the online cases, none of which had been the subject of an inquiry [2]. In March 2026, the father of an entrapment victim held in Lahore’s Camp Jail went missing after visiting his son [56]. Families also say they have faced obstruction; in December 2025, a press conference they had planned at the Lahore Press Club was cancelled, and they protested outside instead [57].

Judicial Outcomes: Detention, Death Sentences, and Appeals

Section 295-C carries a mandatory death sentence, yet Pakistan has never executed anyone for blasphemy [5]. The result is a system in which trial courts convict and sentence to death, and people then spend years on death row while appeals move slowly. HRCP counted at least 15 blasphemy death sentences in 2025 [36].

Several cases show how long that wait can be. Asia Bibi spent eight years on death row before the Supreme Court acquitted her in October 2018 [58]. Anwar Kenneth, a Christian man with bipolar disorder whose case was registered in 2001, was acquitted by the Supreme Court in October 2025; the court noted that the prosecution had relied on only two witnesses [59]. USCIRF reports that he spent 23 years on death row [60]. Pastor Zafar Bhatti was acquitted after 13 years in prison and died days after his release [60]. Aneeqa Ateeq spent nearly four years under a death sentence before her acquittal [16]. Junaid Hafeez has been in custody since 2013, and at least seven judges were transferred during his trial [47].

The appellate courts have been more willing to examine digital evidence than the trial courts. In acquitting Aneeqa Ateeq, the LHC pointed to the absence of any forensic check on the complainant’s phone [16]. In the November 2025 acquittal of five young men, the bench asked whether action should

be taken against the complainant [38]. These rulings help individual defendants, but they come years after arrest and after a trial court has already imposed a death sentence.

Intimidation of Judges and Lawyers

Pressure on the courts comes from several directions. Amnesty International found that trial court judges “may themselves also face threats and intimidation” and that there are “frequent reports of the lack of independence by trial courts and sometimes even high courts, largely due to pressure exerted by complainants or others in support of the law” [4].

The most prominent recent case involved the Supreme Court itself. In July 2024, after Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa ruled that Ahmadis could practice their faith in private, a TLP leader announced a bounty of PKR 10 million on him. In August, the Supreme Court revised the ruling, which USCIRF described as likely a response to that pressure [43]. In January 2025, the Pakistan Peoples Party’s Human Rights Cell reported a smear campaign against Justice Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court after he granted bail in one of the online cases [17]. In the IHC, the acting chief justice’s transfer of the blasphemy petitions to a division bench in April 2025 prompted objections from two other judges of the court [61], while religious hardliners campaigned publicly against the inquiry [62].

Lawyers face direct threats. In April 2014, three men told Rashid Rehman, an HRCP coordinator defending Junaid Hafeez, during a hearing in Multan Central Prison, “You will not come to court next time because you will not exist any more”; the judge said nothing [63]. Rehman was shot dead in his Multan office on May 7, 2014 [64]. Among the 93 prisoners interviewed by the NCHR, 14 (15%) said their lawyers had been pressured to drop their cases [1]. The 2011 assassination of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer by his guard, Mumtaz Qadri, after he called for reform of the blasphemy laws, remains a reference point for anyone in public life who questions their use [53].



6. OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

Organizations that try to help people accused of blasphemy face constraints at each stage: getting a lawyer to the accused, keeping the accused alive in detention, and moving the accused and their families to safety after release. Each stage is complicated by legal restrictions on civil society and by the risk to the organization's own staff.

Emergency Legal Counsel

The first hours after arrest matter most in an online case, because that is when devices are seized, statements are taken, and the FIR is written. Few lawyers will take these cases. Amnesty International found that “few lawyers are willing to defend people accused of blasphemy because of the serious risks involved,” and recorded a case in which a defense lawyer quit after being attacked in court by clerics [4]. Human Rights Watch reports that lawyers who take blasphemy cases are ostracized [5].

The bottlenecks are practical as well as social:

- **Access:** in the online cases, the first detention is often by private individuals, so the accused may be held before any official record exists [1].
- **Evidence:** defense lawyers need early access to forensic reports, call records, and the complainant's device. The IHC found that the FIA often did not examine the complainant's device at all [2].
- **Bail:** because the principal offenses are non-bailable, an emergency response cannot rely on securing release; it must plan for long detention [4].
- **Venue:** high-risk trials may be moved inside prisons, as Junaid Hafeez's was in 2014, which limits who can attend [47].
- **Continuity:** cases outlast individual lawyers and judges; at least seven judges were transferred during the Hafeez trial [47].

Prison Protection

Detention does not guarantee safety. In September 2014, Muhammad Asghar, a 70-year-old British-Pakistani man on death row for blasphemy with a history of mental illness, was shot and wounded by a prison guard in Adiala jail; HRCP said the attack “was not unexpected” [65]. Amnesty International documented the killing of a blasphemy suspect by a police officer with an axe inside a police lockup [4]. Prison authorities often respond to the threat by holding blasphemy prisoners in isolation. Junaid Hafeez has been held in solitary confinement since 2014 [48], and HRCP has described his treatment as a denial of the right to a fair trial [66]. Isolation reduces the risk of attack by other inmates but adds the harms of prolonged solitary confinement. For the online cases, the scale of the problem has grown: the NCHR counted 767 people held in the cases it examined by mid-2024 [1], and families have reported more than 150 accused in Adiala, more than 170 in Lahore's jails, and 55 in Karachi Central Jail [11].

Relocation Logistics

An acquittal does not end the threat. Amnesty International notes that “even if they have been cleared on appeal, there is still a potential threat to their lives” [4]. After Asia Bibi’s acquittal, religious groups threatened the Supreme Court judges who heard her case [58]. Families of the accused are also at risk; Bolo Bhi has recorded cases in which accusations led to families being displaced [67].

Relocation runs into three problems. Internal relocation is fragile, because an accusation can follow a person through social media to a new city. Regional transit countries offer limited protection: Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and only launched a national screening mechanism in September 2023, with unclear implementation [68]. In 2017, Ijaz Masih, a Pakistani Christian asylum seeker, died in Bangkok’s Immigration Detention Centre after being denied medical care; he had been detained with his family for more than a year, and his refugee claim was rejected the day before he died [69]. In Sri Lanka, after the April 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, about 1,100 refugees and asylum seekers, including Pakistani Ahmadis, were threatened and forced into crowded temporary shelters [70]. Resettlement to third countries depends on processes that move slowly and that humanitarian organizations do not control.

Constraints on Organizations

The organizations best placed to help face their own restrictions. Pakistan’s 2015 policy on international NGOs requires them to register with the Ministry of Interior and sign memoranda that fix their areas and sectors of work [8]. Human Rights Watch reported that the policy has been used to impede the registration and functioning of rights groups [58]. The 2022 policy for local NGOs receiving foreign funds requires screening by 14 government departments, including security agencies, and provincial authorities have deregistered thousands of organizations [8]. The CIVICUS Monitor rates Pakistan’s civic space as “repressed” [71]. Front Line Defenders reports that the blasphemy laws are disproportionately used against Christian human rights defenders [72].

Communication itself carries risk. Section 26A of PECA criminalizes false information likely to cause unrest [26], and the DRF has documented its use against journalists [73]. Organizations that publish findings about specific complainants or officials, or that share case files over messaging applications, must account for the possibility that the same laws used against the accused could be used against them.

7. FINDINGS FROM DIGITAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORS

Pakistan’s digital rights organizations documented the misuse of online blasphemy accusations well before the recent increase. Their work, read together with that of international monitors, supports the findings set out above.

Bolo Bhi

Bolo Bhi’s tracker of blasphemy accusations, enquiries, detentions, and arrests based on social media posts records about 20 incidents between 2016 and 2019 and shows the FIA’s growing role, along with jurisdictional disputes between the FIA and local police [45]. Its content-blocking tracker records that the PTA reported blocking 800,000 websites in October 2018 for “blasphemous, anti-state and other objectionable content,” with no notice to the sites and no avenue for appeal [74]. In 2013, responding to the arrest of a young man in Toba Tek Singh over a Facebook comment, Bolo Bhi warned that arrests “based on such loose evidence” set “a dangerous precedent” and called for protection of the accused and his family [67]. In 2018, it argued that hate speech provisions, including Section 11 of PECA, were enabling personal vendettas, that calling someone an Ahmadi had itself become a form of incitement, and that false accusers should be punished [75].

Digital Rights Foundation

The DRF has focused on the structure of PECA and its use against journalists and critics. When the 2025 amendments passed, DRF founder Nighat Dad described them as “one restrictive law after another, introduced under the guise of public interest or national security,” adding that “the real intent is consolidating power and controlling the narrative” [26]. The DRF’s September 2025 analysis of post-amendment PECA cases found that Section 26A leaves the terms “fake” and “likely to cause unrest” undefined, and that the Act functions as a tool of harassment through FIRs, arrests, and prolonged investigations [73]. The DRF’s Cyber Harassment Helpline has also recorded hacking and coordinated mass reporting of journalists’ accounts [76]. Those are the same techniques of account compromise and coordinated complaint that appear in the entrapment cases.

International and Statutory Monitors

The NCHR’s 2024 report remains the most detailed official account of the entrapment cases [1]. Human Rights Watch’s 2025 report connects blasphemy accusations to land disputes and extortion [5], and its 2026 World Report records that no inquiry commission had been formed [21]. USCIRF has recommended that Pakistan be designated a Country of Particular Concern and has documented the online cases in its annual reports and its 2025 country update [22], [60]. HRCF’s annual reports provide the most consistent record of incidents against Ahmadis and Christians [40], [36]. Amnesty International’s 2025 country report notes continued arrests under the blasphemy laws and the expanded censorship powers in PECA [77].

Table 6 Principal Findings by Monitor

Monitor	Type	Principal finding relevant to this report	Source
NCHR	Statutory body	A private entity initiated almost all FIA cases; forensic examinations were not conducted; 68% of interviewees reported torture	[1]
Human Rights Watch	International	Blasphemy accusations used for land grabs and extortion; no inquiry commission formed by December 2025	[5], [21]
Amnesty International	International	Few lawyers will defend the accused; main offenses are non-bailable; trial judges face threats	[4]
USCIRF	U.S. government commission	Alleged collusion between a “blasphemy gang” and FIA officials	[22]
HRCP	Domestic	Sustained attacks on Ahmadis; at least 15 blasphemy death sentences in 2025	[40], [36]
Bolo Bhi	Digital rights	Tracked accusations based on social media posts, 2016 to 2019; content blocked without notice or appeal	[45], [74]
Digital Rights Foundation	Digital rights	Section 26A of PECA is undefined and used to harass through FIRs and prolonged investigations	[73]
Freedom Network	Press freedom	58 legal cases against journalists, mostly under PECA, April 2025 to March 2026	[50]

SYNTHESIS AND OUTLOOK

The documented record supports five conclusions.

First, the rise in online blasphemy prosecutions since 2022 cannot be explained by a rise in blasphemous speech alone. Official bodies, including the NCHR and the Punjab Police Special Branch, and a judge of the IHC have found evidence of a coordinated process in which private actors find targets, induce them to share content, detain them, and file complaints [1], [2].

Second, the law makes this process effective. The mandatory death sentence under Section 295-C, the non-bailable status of the main offenses, and the routine addition of PECA charges mean that a screenshot can lead to years of detention before any court examines how it was obtained [4], [3].

Third, the FIA Cyber Crime Wing accepted complaints from a single private source, often skipped forensic examination of complainants' devices, and did not follow the procedural requirements for senior-level investigation [1], [2]. The transfer to the NCCIA has not been accompanied by a public review of these cases.

Fourth, the people most exposed are young Muslim men reached through social media, alongside the religious minorities who have always been accused at disproportionate rates [6], [1]. Secular critics and the lawyers who defend the accused face related risks under PECA.

Fifth, the consequences extend well beyond the courtroom: killings by crowds and by police, deaths in custody, threats against judges, and the displacement of families. Humanitarian organizations trying to respond are limited by a shortage of lawyers, by unsafe prisons, by weak relocation options, and by restrictions on their own operations.

The central open question is whether any Pakistani institution will examine the entrapment cases as a group. The IHC commission order remains suspended, and the families' figures suggest that several hundred people remain in prison [10]. Until an independent inquiry takes place, appellate courts will continue to correct individual cases years after the harm has been done.

DISCLAIMER OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This investigative report was compiled through secondary data aggregation from verified international and domestic human rights monitors, statutory bodies, court reporting, and digital rights organizations. To ensure linguistic clarity, structural organization, and objective tonality, the authors used Large Language Model (LLM) technology for drafting and refinement. The use of AI was limited to language restructuring and objective neutrality checks, ensuring that claims are directly supported by cited evidence. Allegations described in this report are attributed to their sources and, unless stated otherwise, have not been adjudicated. The core data, analysis, and conclusions remain the sole responsibility of the investigative team at Amnesty Freedom.

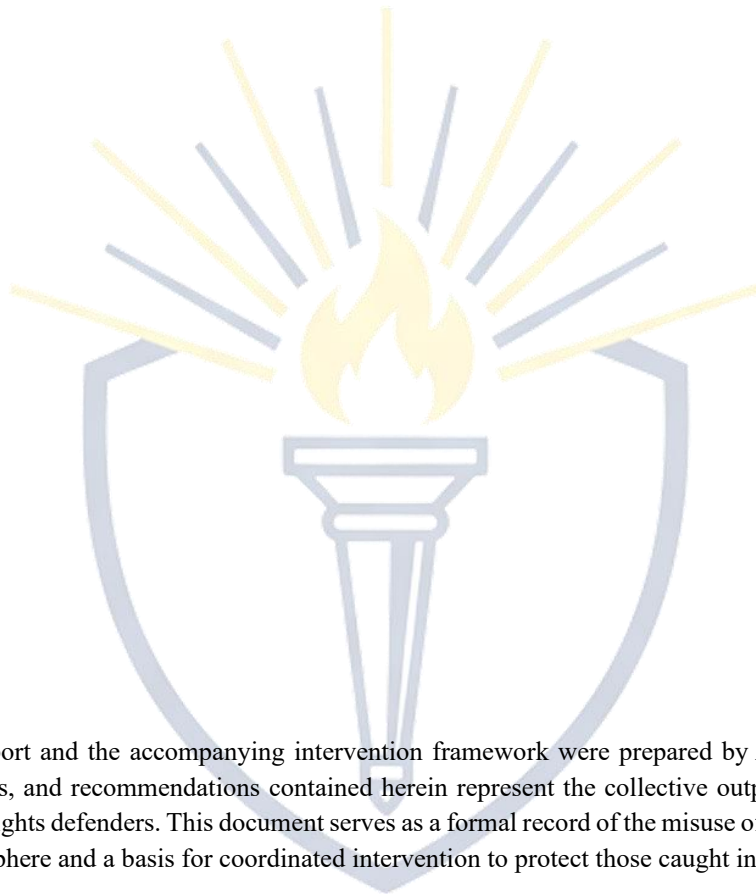
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This investigative report and the accompanying intervention framework were prepared by Amnesty Freedom. The research, data analysis, and recommendations contained herein represent the collective output of researchers, legal analysts, and human rights defenders. This document serves as a formal record of the misuse of blasphemy accusations in Pakistan's digital sphere and a basis for coordinated intervention to protect those caught in it.



Protecting People Accused of Online Blasphemy in Pakistan

An Intervention Framework for Humanitarian Organizations

The evidence presented in the investigative report *The Blasphemy Trap: An Investigative Report on Digital Entrapment and Blasphemy Prosecutions in Pakistan (2016–2026)* shows that online blasphemy cases follow a recognizable sequence: deceptive contact, inducement to share content, private detention, a complaint by a repeat complainant, and prosecution under stacked charges. Each step creates a point at which intervention can reduce harm. This framework sets out practical measures for humanitarian and legal aid organizations, donors, and the governments and technology companies whose decisions affect these cases. It draws on the recommendations already made by the NCHR and on the operational problems documented in Section 6 of the report.

Priorities for Intervention

The measures below are grouped by the stage of a case at which they apply. None requires a change in Pakistani law, although several would be easier with one.

1. Rapid Legal Response

Organizations should maintain a roster of vetted defense lawyers in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Karachi, where most online cases are filed, with funding that allows a lawyer to reach the accused within hours of arrest. The priority in the first hours is to record how the accused was detained, by whom, and where, and to request preservation of the complainant's device and call records. The IHC found that these records were often never examined.

2. Independent Digital Forensics

Defense teams need access to forensic experts who can test the integrity of screenshots, establish the origin of messages, and identify reused accounts. A shared, confidential database of the profile names, phone numbers, and account identifiers that appear across FIRs would help lawyers show the pattern that the NCHR and the IHC identified. Any such database must be protected to the highest standard, because its exposure would endanger both the accused and the organizations holding it.

3. Protection in Detention

Organizations should press prison authorities for protective arrangements that do not amount to indefinite solitary confinement, for independent monitoring of custodial treatment, and for prompt investigation of every death in custody. The four deaths cited by the IHC and the death of Husnain Ali should be investigated and the findings published.

4. Support for Families

Families of the accused face social exclusion, threats, loss of income, and, in some cases, disappearance. Support should include emergency shelter, legal advice, documentation of threats, and safe means of communication. Families have been the main source of evidence about the network, and their safety is a precondition for any future inquiry.

5. Relocation Planning

Relocation should be planned before acquittal, not after. That includes risk assessments for return to the home district, arrangements for internal relocation, and early engagement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and with third countries that operate resettlement or humanitarian visa programs. Organizations should avoid routing people through transit countries where asylum seekers face indefinite immigration detention.

6. Platform Accountability

Meta, which operates Facebook and WhatsApp, should review how its platforms are used to run the fake profiles described in the report, act on reports of coordinated inauthentic accounts targeting Pakistani users, and set out a clear process for preserving data requested by defense counsel as well as by prosecutors.

7. Engagement with Pakistani Authorities

Organizations should support the NCHR's recommendations: a joint investigation team, forensic review of all seized devices, action against those who carried out entrapment, compliance with Sections 156-A and 196 of the CrPC, and accountability for FIA officers who departed from procedure. They should also urge the federal government to proceed with an independent inquiry regardless of the outcome of the pending intra-court appeal, and should ask that the NCCIA review the case files it inherited from the FIA.

8. Staff Security and Data Protection

Because PECA can be used against those who publish or share information, organizations should adopt secure communication practices, minimize the personal data they hold, and seek legal review before naming individual complainants or officials. Staff working on these cases should have access to the same protection planning that the organization provides to the accused.

Conclusion

The record shows a problem that is documented, measurable, and partly acknowledged by Pakistan's own institutions. What is missing is a coordinated response. Humanitarian organizations cannot change the blasphemy laws, but they can shorten the time between arrest and competent defense, reduce the risk of harm in detention, and make relocation possible for those who need it. These measures will not resolve the underlying legal problem, but they would reduce the harm suffered by the people caught in these cases while that problem remains.